FILE: TASK FORCE 140

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER
MANNED SPACECRAFT RECOVERY, ATLANTIC
TASK FORCE ONE FOUR ZERO
NAVAL AIR STATION
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23511

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From: Commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1); forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A
(b) CTF-140 ltr ser 012 of 8 May 1970

Encl: (1) Chronology of Highlights, 1970
(2) Basic Narrative

1. Enclosures (1) and (2), forwarded in accordance with reference (a), summarize this command's operations during the period 1 January through 31 December 1970.

2. Reference (b) forwarded documentary material pertaining to Apollo 13.

Leo W. Early

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CINCLANTFLT (CODE N334)

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS 1970

9 January	Rear Admiral William S. Guest relieved Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus as CTF-140
1 April	Training for Apollo 13
11 April	Launch of Apollo 13
13 April	Abort of Apollo 13
17 April	Splashdown of Apollo 13
22 July	CTF-140 was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation by the Secretary of the Navy for meritorious support of the Apollo program
26 August	Rear Admiral Richard R. Pratt, Commander Service Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet assumed command of Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic as an additional duty after relieving Rear Admiral William S. Guest.
October - December	Training for Apollo 14

BASIC NARRATIVE

COMMAND HISTORY FOR
MANNED SPACECRAFT RECOVERY FORCE, ATLANTIC (TF-140) FOR 1970

On 9 January 1970, Rear Admiral William S. Guest relieved Rear Admiral Philip S. McManus as Commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic.

On 1 April 1970, USS NEW (DD-818) conducted Apollo recovery exercises with U. S. Air Force units off the Virginia Coast in preparation for Apollo 13.

For Apollo 13, NEW was assigned a recovery station approximately 500 nautical miles East of Cape Kennedy. USS ESCAPE (ARS-6) was assigned inport standby at Mayport, Florida as the launch site salvage ship. A detachment of SH-3 "Sea King" helicopters from Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron THREE was on standby alert at the Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, R. I., and Norfolk, Virginia. In the event of a launch site abort, these helicopters would have deployed to Cape Kennedy to assist in the search operations for the SNAP-27 nuclear package attached to the Lunar Module.

USS ESCAPE and HS-3 were released from mission support after the successful translunar injection. Weather Reconnaissance Squadron FOUR provided one WC-121 aircraft for launch site weather reconnaissance on launch day. Eleven Air Force HC-130-H Rescue Aircraft were assigned to Task Force 140 for mission support.

The mission was aborted on 13 April due to an oxygen tank explosion in the Service Module. The Lunar module descent engine was fired to place the astronauts back on a free-return trajectory for a landing on the Indian Ocean Line. Three U. S. Destroyers, USS BORDELON (DD-881), USS FORREST ROYAL (DD-872) and USS WILLIAM C. LAWE (DD-763) were alerted to render mission support. The astronauts later re-ignited the lunar module engine to place them on a course targeted for the Mid Pacific Line. The Apollo 13 astronauts and their spacecraft were recovered in the Pacific on 17 April, some 520 nautical miles southeast of American Samoa by the primary recovery ship USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2).

On 22 July 1970, Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation by the Secretary of the Navy for meritorious service from 1 July 1967 to 26 July 1969 in support of the Apollo Program.

On 15 August, 25 Naval Reserve Officers from the Naval Air Reserve Training Unit, Naval Air Facility, Washington, D. C. visited Task Force 140 headquarters. During their visit they were given a presentation on the Navy participation in Project Apollo and the responsibility of Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic to support this program.

On 18 August 1970, 14 Senior Naval Reserve Officers, as part of the Commander-in-Chief Atlantic Fleet Command Orientation Program, visited Task Force 140 headquarters and were given a presentation on the Navy participation in Project Apollo and the responsibility of Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic to support this program.

On 26 August, Rear Admiral Richard R. Pratt, Commander Service Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet relieved Rear Admiral William S. Guest and assumed additional duties as Commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic (CTF-140), Navy Deputy to the Department of Defense Manager, and Chief of Naval Operations Representative for Manned Space Flight Support Operations.

On 30 September the first In House Nominal Launch Simulation Exercise was conducted in the Recovery Control Center, Atlantic.

On 28 October a Launch Abort simulation exercise was conducted. This training utilized Task Force 140 Staff personnel and was designed to acquaint them with the conditions and procedures that woudl be likely to occur if the Apollo 14 Launch vehicle malfunctioned and necessitated an abort moments after launch from Cape Kennedy.

On 2 December another training exercise was conducted from the Recovery Control Center, Atlantic for a contingency landing on the Atlantic Ocean Line in the South Atlantic Ocean. A mission abort to this area could be performed from a deep space emergency aboard the Apollo 14 spacecraft.

On 16 December, at-sea recovery training was conducted with the USNS VANGUARD. In the event that Apollo 14 aborted after lift-off, VANGUARD from her mid-Atlantic position, could come under operational control of Commander Task Force 140 to recover the Astronauts and their command module if the splashdown occured in her area. This training qualified VANGUARD's crew to perform the recovery operations.

Apollo recovery training was conducted by Underwater Demolition Team TWENTY-TWO and Helicopter Combat Support Squadron SIX on 17-18 November at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va. The UDT swimmers jumped from a helicopter with their recovery equipment. Once in the water, they attached the Apollo flotation collar to the Apollo training module. This

training updated the proficiency of the Atlantic Fleet UDT men to support Apollo missions in the Atlantic.

During July-December 1970, bi-monthly communications exercises were conducted with unalerted merchant ships at sea in order to evaluate their capability for supporting Apollo recovery operations on a "ship of opportunity" basis. Such support might be required in the event of a spacecraft landing in a contingency area outside of the normal recovery area.

During the last weeks of 1970, Task Force 140 began making final preparations for Apollo 14. Units assigned to the Task Force to support this lunar landing mission included: USS SPIEGEL GROVE (LSD 32); USS HAWKINS (DD 873); USS PAIUTE (ATF 159) and a detachment of helicopters from Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron SEVEN. Approximately 6 HC-130H aircraft from the U. S. Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service will support Atlantic Fleet contingency recovery operations.